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Biblical Notes.

The Authority of Christ. In what did the authority of Jesus Christ consist and how did it lay hold of men? The question is not often directly and carefully considered. In his *Pastor Pastorum* Latham answers it with quite a little fullness of detail. He says that this authority took hold of men (1) in bringing to the birth, within men, thoughts which were lying in embryo in their own hearts; e. g., he asserted that God was the Father not only of the nation but of every individual in it, and men said, "we always thought it must be so, and so it is." Again (2) He not only told men that they were God's children but *treated* them as such. This notion lay very deep in the hearts of the children of Israel, even the poorest in Galilee; and when the Lord brought it to light, men listened to Him with breathless respect. (3) The scribes had one set of ideas for themselves and a lower set for the people they taught. But Jesus had but one set of teachings and urged them upon all, flattered none and yet thought the noblest and highest truth meant for the poorest. This took hold of men's hearts. (4) He assumed a certain positive authority, in the Sermon on the Mount, by putting His own commands in contrast with the written Law. A teaching which claimed authority coordinate with that of Moses might well startle the multitude.

The Form of Our Lord's Teaching. Latham also gathers some interesting points about the public teaching of our Lord, especially the Sermon on the Mount, the form of its deliverance. It was noticeable that, in contrast with the scribes, he cites no authorities while they overwhelmed men with quotations. He gave nobody else's opinions. He tells people what they ought to do as he sees their duty. Again, he uses the natural rhetoric of earnest speech, beginning with the unexpected and thus arresting attention. Moreover, his speech is not a code of laws. Men had enough precepts. So he puts his injunctions into such strong forms and uses as examples such extreme cases that men see that he has in mind principles not rules. He makes no exceptions. All is broad, and strong and simple. His purpose is to leave seed thoughts in men's minds to be carried in men's memories. Therefore he embodies them in terse sayings, illustrated by cases which are familiar but extreme.

The writer adds that "nothing in our Lord's ministry impresses me more than the extraordinary sobriety of the whole movement. We hear nothing of religious transports or ecstatic devotion. People listen in awe as to a communication made from above. They never dare to applaud. He is too much above them for that. . . . True human freedom was with Him a sacred thing and a man is not free when he is fascinated by fervid oratory, or when he is intoxicated by religious fanaticism. . . . One cause of this sobriety of the great movement may be found in the elevation and tone of authority which has just been spoken of as characterizing our Lord. He seemed to move on a plane parallel indeed to that of man, but a little above it."